

BETTER COMPENSATION: THE KEY TO AN EDUCATED AND COMMITTED EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKFORCE

DID YOU KNOW...

There is a direct relationship between the qualifications of early childhood teachers, compensation and the quality of their classrooms?

There is strong, significant evidence of a positive correlation between teacher qualifications and quality with respect to the learning environment for all young children in early childhood education and care settings, including infants and toddlers. A large international meta-analysis suggests that if we require educated, qualified teachers, we will see significant improvements in quality within center-based and home-based settings.¹ The qualifications, compensation and retention of early childhood teachers are the primary indicators of quality in an early care and education program.² Early childhood professionals receiving higher compensation provide higher quality care.³

Many early childhood teachers already have credentials and degrees?

Many early childhood teachers already have college credentials—nearly one-third (30%) of center-based educators and one-fifth (20%) of home-based providers hold a bachelor's degree or higher, with many more holding associate degrees.⁴

The biggest barrier for quality in child care programs is the level of compensation for the teachers?

81% of early childhood educators surveyed agree that any major effort to increase the quality of early childhood education programs will fail unless early educators received increased salaries and benefits.⁵

One of the lowest paid professions in our country is the child care workforce?

The ECE workforce ranks in the third percentile for annual earnings when compared to wages in more than 500 other occupations. Their low wages result in poverty rates that are 5.7 times higher than those of elementary and middle school teachers.⁴

When a child's brain is experiencing the most growth, their teachers are being paid the least?

Among center-based teaching staff with a bachelor's degree or higher working in other ECE centers, early educators working only with infants and toddlers are paid about \$8,000 per year less than those working exclusively with children age three to five, not yet in kindergarten.⁴

Nearly half of the child care workforce is on public assistance?

43% of early educators, compared to 28% of the U.S workforce as a whole and 19% of Middle/Elementary school teachers, participate in public safety net programs.⁴

¹ Manning M, Garvis S, Fleming C, Wong T. W. G. The relationship between teacher qualification and the quality of the early childhood care and learning environment. Campbell Systematic Reviews 2017:1 DOI: 10.4073/csr.2017.1

² Economic Policy Institute, 2016. It's time for an ambitious national investment in America's children. Bivens, J; Garcia, E; Gould, E; Weiss, E; and Wilson, V.

³ Center of Children, Families, and the Law, 2005. Compensation of Early Childhood teachers: What value do we place on young children?

⁴ Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, 2024. Early educator pay & economic insecurity across the states. Early Childhood Workforce Index 2024. University of California, Berkeley.

⁵ NAEYC 2016. Growing the Demand for Quality.